

16 North Warren Street  
(Commercial Building)  
Trenton  
Mercer County  
New Jersey

HABS No. NJ-959

HABS  
NJ,  
11-TRET,  
32-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

16 North Warren Street (Commercial Building)

HABS No. NJ-959

Location: 16 North Warren Street, Trenton, Mercer County, New Jersey.

Last Owner: Plapinger-Platt Down Town Property

Last Occupant: Delaware Valley Delivery Services

Last Use: Commercial

The building at 16 North Warren Street was demolished in September 1987 to make way for new commercial construction.

Significance: Three generations of the Satterthwaite family operated a seed and agricultural implement store at this location from 1885 to 1963. Their presence in downtown Trenton affirmed the importance of farming in the fertile Delaware Valley countryside surrounding the capital city of the "Garden State". The Satterthwaite's business was the longest-lived in this mid-19th century commercial building, one of only a handful of survivors from before the Civil War in downtown Trenton. The rather plain upper floors of brick with regular, rectilinear openings are strikingly contrasted by an intact mid-19th century storefront of wood and cast iron, which shows the influence of the Italianate style. It is one of the finest 19th century storefronts to survive in the city.

## Part I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: ca. 1820
2. Architect: Not Known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Chain of Title references from the Mercer County Hall of Records unless otherwise noted:
  - 1827 - Transfer by will from Job Moore to his heirs of a property on the "East side of Warren Street" which included a "house". Moore owned the property since 1794. Hunterdon County Record of Wills.
  - 1844 - Transfer from the heirs of Job Moore et al to Joshua English. Hunterdon County Deed Book G 150.
  - 1849 April 1 - Transfer from Joshua English and Mary M. his wife to Edward Dolton. Hunterdon County Deed book P page 144.
  - 1858 April 1 - Transfer from Edward Dolton and Mary his wife to James C. Manning. Deed book 40 page 388.
  - 1884 February 25 - Transfer from James C. Manning and Sarah his wife to James Angus. Deed book 138 page 535.
  - 1884 April 1 - Transfer from James Angus and Mary his wife to Jonathan H. Blackwell, R.S. Woodruff Jr., William Whittaker and Samuel Caminade. Deed book 138 page 536.
  - 1885 February 2 - Transfer from Jonathan Blackwell and Susan his wife; Samuel Caminade and Henrietta L. his wife; and Robert S. Woodruff Jr. to Benjamin Satterthwaite. Deed book 152 page 531.
  - 1923 December 23 - Transfer from John Satterthwaite and Linton and Florence Satterthwaite; William Elmer Baker and Otta Baker his wife; Walter B. and Mabel L. Satterthwaite husband and wife; Leslie and Priscilla Satterthwaite husband and wife; Howard G. and Elizabeth M. Satterthwaite husband and wife; Mary R. and Laura H. Satterthwaite to John R. Satterthwaite. Deed book 532 page 318.
  - 1960 November 15 - Sheriff's deed to Sara A. Satterthwaite. Deed book 1564 page 133.
  - 1963 June 7 - Transfer from Sara A. and Benjamin Satterthwaite her husband to JACL, Inc., a New Jersey corporation. Deed book 1663 page 26.
  - 1974 February 15 - Transfer from JACL, Inc. to Plapinger-Platt Down Town Property, a partnership. Deed book 1962, page 440.

1987 September - Transfer from Plapinger-Platt Down Town  
Property to DKM Properties Corp.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Not Known.
5. Original plans and construction: Original plans or drawings not known to exist.
6. Alterations and additions: The exterior of the upper floors of the building have not been greatly altered over the life of the building. A photograph of North Warren Street in about 1890 shows the building with a bracketed cornice which has since been removed. The first floor storefront is largely original as well, although historic photographs show a minor alteration in the removal of the street door entry to the upper floors sometime between 1888 and the 1910s. The extra space occupied by the entry to the upper floors was incorporated into a larger display window, thus creating a slightly asymmetrical facade arrangement. Inside, the first floor retail space was apparently completely remodeled in the early 20th century, adding an ornate tile floor and pressed metal ceiling.
8. Historical Context: The building now commonly known as Satterthwaite's Seed Store was probably built in the 1820s. The site was part of the densely developed commercial core of Trenton, already thriving at the turn of the 19th century. It was constructed as a dwelling, and it continued to be thought of primarily as a residential building even in 1849, when the property was sold as a "Three Story Brick House."  
The first tenant of the building, as noted in Trenton city directories was James Manning, proprietor of a "fancy goods" store. Notations for his store from its first directory appearance in 1858 suggest that he sold ribbon, hat trimmings, and decorative textiles. Manning and his family worked together and lived above the store until 1884.  
In 1885, Benjamin Satterthwaite and some others jointly purchased the building, and the Tomlinson & Satterthwaite store opened, selling agricultural implements, fertilizer, and seeds. Before 1885, Tomlinson had lived and worked next door, managing J.W. Cornell & Co., an agricultural implement dealer. That firm was a direct successor to Phillip Phillips' Seed Store, begun at 14 North Warren Street in the 1850s. By the turn of the century, John Satterthwaite

was in charge of the long-lived business, by having had the good fortune to marry the boss' daughter. In 1915 the Tomlinson name was dropped from the business, which became known as Satterthwaite's Seed Store at that time. A photograph from about 1887 shows the proud young proprietor, John Satterthwaite and a friend, Harry Disbrow standing out in front of the store, while a black driver named Lige sits on the store's delivery wagon hitched to a handsome horse. The storefront of the building is much as it looks now, although the cast iron colonettes at the corners of the windows are clearly painted polychromatically, and an awning covers the detailing at the cornice.

The Satterthwaites' continued in the same agricultural business for three generations. The upper floors ceased being used as an apartment about 1930, although the Satterthwaite's had not lived there since about 1900. In the 20th century, the store became increasingly specialized in dairy supplies, reflecting the increased importance of diarying in Mercer County, and the decline of more general farming. It continued to carry seeds, and was identified in the Trenton City Directories through 1946 as Satterthwaite's Seed Store. When Benjamin Satterthwaite retired in 1963, he liquidated the stock and sold the building. The Dunham's Department Store, located elsewhere within the same city block, bought the building and used it primarily for storage since that time.

## Part II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character: A three story vernacular commercial building with an intact mid-19th century storefront. The spare upper floors of the building reflect the urban vernacular architecture developed in the Delaware Valley in the 18th century and carried through the first quarter of the 19th. The first floor storefront is a reflection of architectural taste in the mid-19th century, incorporating the round arches, brackets, and slender columns of the Italianate style. Cornice brackets which were removed from the building in the 20th century gave further emphasis to the Italianate style in this vernacular commercial building.
2. Condition of fabric: The building is in fair condition, with some damage from roof leaks and water infiltration at the windows. The storefront's windows have been

removed and the openings boarded, but otherwise it is in good condition. The interior is in poor condition, having been heavily used as a warehouse in the 1960s and '70's.

#### B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: The North Warren Street facade is 17' long and the building extends into the block 105'. It occupies all of the property known as Block 4B Lot 18 in Trenton.  
The three story building is articulated into three regularly spaced bays across the upper stories; the first floor is a storefront with a slightly off-center entry between two large display windows.
2. Foundation: Randomly sized fieldstone walls, not visible from the exterior.
3. Walls: The exterior walls are made of red brick laid in a Flemish bond pattern. The brick has been painted white in the 20th century. There is no surface detailing or ornamentation.
4. Structural system: Load-bearing brick walls with wooden interior framing and woden roof trusses.
5. Storefront: The storefront consists of a deeply recessed off-center door flanked by two display windows. Thin cast iron columns mark the corner of each window; cast iron is also used for the paneled pilasters framing the outer edge of the store. A wooden cornice over the storefront contains large scroll brackets, bead and reel variant moldings, and a frieze with "sawtooth" molding under the dentils. The bulkhead below the storefront windows is covered with plywood.
6. Chimneys: One tall rectangular-section brick chimney extends from the north side of the building. Color differences in the brick and mortar indicate that it was rebuilt and extended in height at some time in the past.
7. Openings

- a. Doors: Entry is gained through the storefront described above. The original door has been removed; presently the opening is covered with plywood. A separate street door to the upper floors which was part of the original design of the building was removed between the late 1880's and about 1910, according to the visual evidence of historic photographs.
  - b. The windows on the upper floors are wooden 2/2 double-hung sash set under plain stone lintels which do not project from the brick wall surface. The upper floor windows are flanked by modern molded plastic shutters attached to the wall surface. There is no remaining physical evidence of original shutters or shutter hardware, although historic photographs of the buildings indicate that louvered shutters did exist in the 19th century.
8. Roof: An asphalt gable roof covers the front of the building; the rear extension of the building is covered by a nearly flat asphalt roof.
- The building includes a simple molded wooden cornice above a plain fascia board. Behind the cornice lies a box gutter, connected to a modern aluminum downspout extending down the far north side of the facade.

### C. Description of Interior

#### 1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: The interior has been greatly altered for use as warehouse space in the 1960s and '70s. The first floor contains a single large space with some interior partitions of wood which do not extend the full height of the space.
- b. Second and third floors: The second and third floors contain a series of six small rooms reached from a hall running front to back in the building along the south wall. The rooms are arranged in a row off the corridor; only the front room receives natural light. The rear of the second floor and the entire third floor were inaccessible at the time of recording due to the filling of this space with boxes and storage items.

2. Stairways: An enclosed staircase runs along the south wall of the building toward the rear. The balustrade has been replaced with a railing made of modern metal pipe. The stairs have open risers and wooden treads. The staircase was originally located along the south wall at the front of the building, with access from a street door. This door and the stairway were removed about the turn of the century.
3. Flooring: The floors are wooden throughout the building. On the first floor, it is narrow (3" wide) oak, over which was laid a tile floor. The small (1" square) tiles are primarily cream, black, and rust-red in color. The floor is laid out in two squares, front and back, marked by wide borders of geometric designs such as squares, triangles, and swastikas, an ancient motif. The designs and their coloration are strongly reminiscent of the art of American Indian tribes of the Southwest. The upper floors of the building are of wider boards, averaging 8 inches. These are soft pine boards, and probably original to construction of the building. The floors are exceptionally dirt-encrusted; no evidence of any finish is evident.
4. Walls and ceilings: The walls and ceilings are all lath and plaster. The ceiling and cornice of the first floor have been covered by painted pressed metal. The ceilings on the second and third floors are generally in poor condition with the plaster pulling away from the lath, and the lath tearing loose from support beams.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Molded door frames surrounding typical 19th century four panel doors are found along the second floor corridor. To the rear of the first floor are three wooden single panel doors of early 20th century date set within a plain, tripartite frame. Two of the doors lead to the rear portion of the building, which probably served as office space for the store in front. The third door leads to a small lavatory.
  - b. Windows: There are no windows other than those visible on the facade.
6. Decorative features: The front of the first floor, the retail selling area for Satterthwaite's, is utilitarian



in nature. The only decorative features other than the floor already described are tongue-and-groove-wooden walls inside the display windows and along the interior face of the bulkhead.

7. Mechanical systems:

Electrical: The first floor is lighted by modern fluorescent tube lights arranged across the center of the ceiling and along the sides of the building. The wiring for these fixtures is contained within an exposed metal pipe. Older light fixtures remain suspended in a row along the length of the building. These fixtures have a metal top and base and a broad frosted globe. The upper floors no longer contain functional electrical systems, but the remains of knob-and-tube wiring are clearly visible applied at cornice height along the hall walls.

Plumbing: A simple lavatory with toilet and sink of utilitarian mid-20th century design are located in a closet at the rear of the first floor retail area.

D. Site

1. General siting and orientation: The building is sited in the middle of the east side of the block of North Warren Street between State Street and East Hanover Street. This block was known in the 20th century as the "Dunham Block" for a large downtown department store which occupied much of the block. The building has a western facade elevation, and no other exposed elevations.
2. Historic landscape design: None.
3. Outbuildings: None.

Part III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original architectural drawings: Not known.
- B. Early Views

1. "Tomlinson & Satterthwaite's Seeds & Implements". Photograph ca. 1887 in the collection of the Satterthwaite family. Used courtesy of Henry F. Satterthwaite, Attorney, 28 W. State Street, Trenton, New Jersey.
2. Picture File - Warren Street Photograph. "Warren Street about 1890" in the Trentoniana Collection of the Trenton Free Public Library.
3. "Satterthwaite's Store". Photograph ca. 1910 in the collection of the Satterthwaite family. Reprinted in Banks of the Delaware (p. 151).

C. Interviews: Henry F. Satterthwaite, September 1987.

D. Bibliography

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

- a. Real Estate Transactions, Mercer County Hall of Records, Trenton, New Jersey.
- b. Real Estate Transactions, Hunterdon County Hall of Records, Flemington, New Jersey.
- c. Record of Wills and Inventories, Hunterdon County Hall of Records, Flemington, New Jersey.
- d. Tax assessment records, Tax Office, City of Trenton.
- e. Richard Hunter Associates. Archaeological Investigation of the Dunham Block. Hunter Associates, Trenton, N.J., 1988.

2. Secondary and published sources:

a. Books

Banks, Ivy Jackson. Banks of the Delaware. Trenton, N.J.: Trenton Historical Society, 1967.

Directory of Trenton, New Jersey. Trenton, N.J. [title and publisher varies], 1854-1976.

Industries of New Jersey. Part I: Trenton, Princeton, Hightstown, Pennington, and Hopewell. New York, Newark, New Jersey and Philadelphia: Historical Publishing Company, 1882.

Trenton, City of. North Ward Historic Resource Survey  
Vol. I, City of Trenton, N.J. 1980.

b. Maps

Combination Atlas Map of Mercer County, New Jersey.  
Philadelphia: Everts & Stewart, 1875.

Gordon, Thomas. Map of the City of Trenton and Its  
Vicinity. Philadelphia: J.F. and C.A. Watson  
Lithographers, 1836.

Insurance Maps of Trenton, New Jersey. New York:  
Sanborn-Perris Map Co., 1890.

Insurance Maps, Trenton New Jersey. Vol. I,  
New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1908.

Sidney, J.C. comp. Map of the City of Trenton,  
New Jersey From Actual Surveys. Philadelphia:  
M. Dripps, 1849.

c. Magazines

Lane, Sally. "Then And Now: A Popular Emporium",  
Sunday Times Magazine. January 25, 1981.

Part IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

Documentation for the Satterthwaite Seed Store at 16 North Warren Street, Trenton, was prepared for DKM Properties Corp. under an agreement with the City of Trenton, the Office of New Jersey Heritage, and DKM Properties Corp. The site was recorded to HABS standards to mitigate the loss of historic buildings, impacted by a project utilizing funds from HUD through an Urban Development Action Grant. The site is under development by DKM Properties as the Capital Center project, a mixed retail and office building containing 331,000 square feet. It is scheduled for completion in 1989.

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August-December 1987

## Site Plan

N. Warren Street

E. State Street

N. Broad Street

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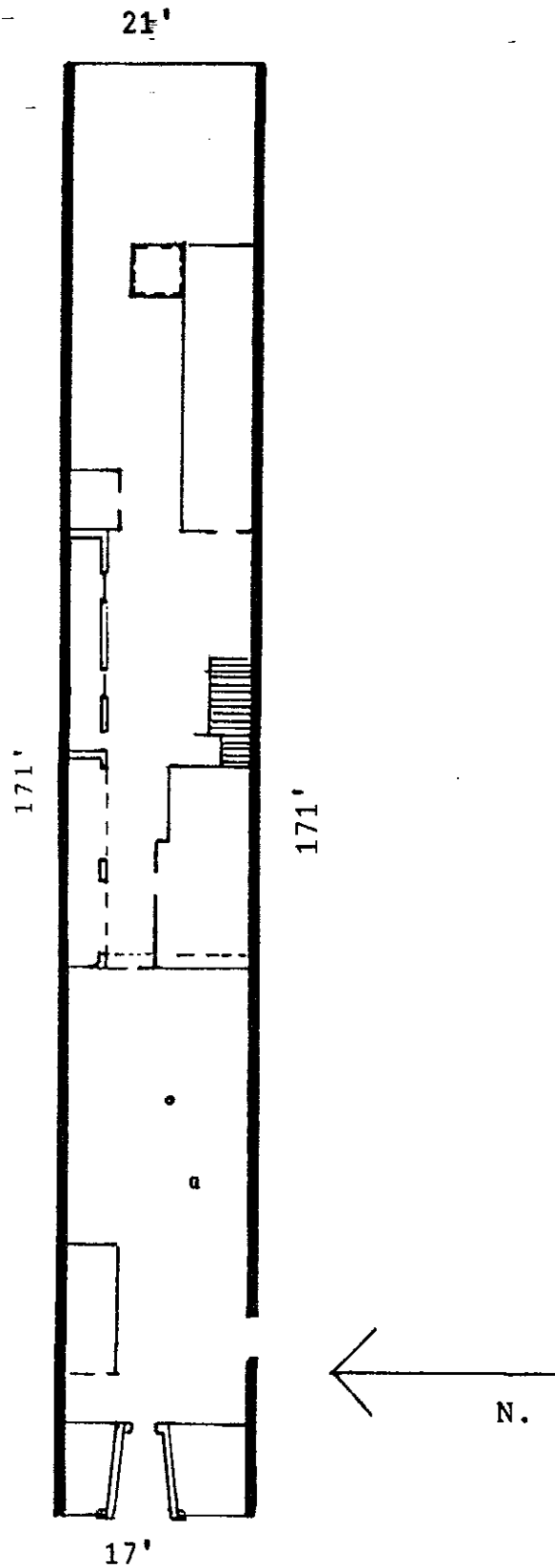
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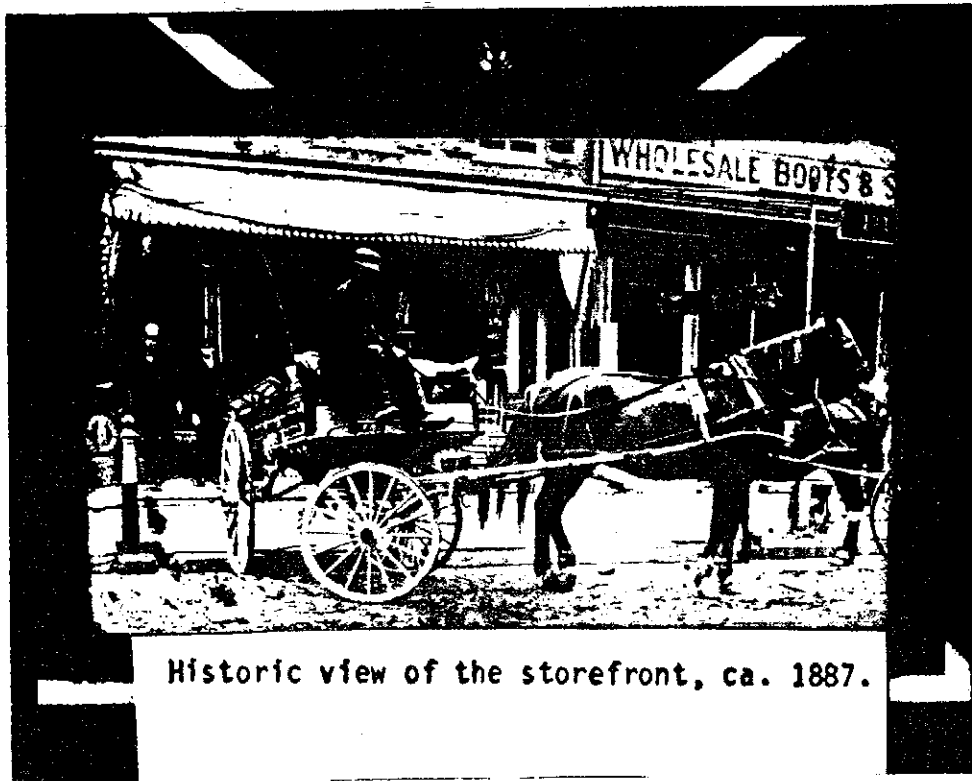
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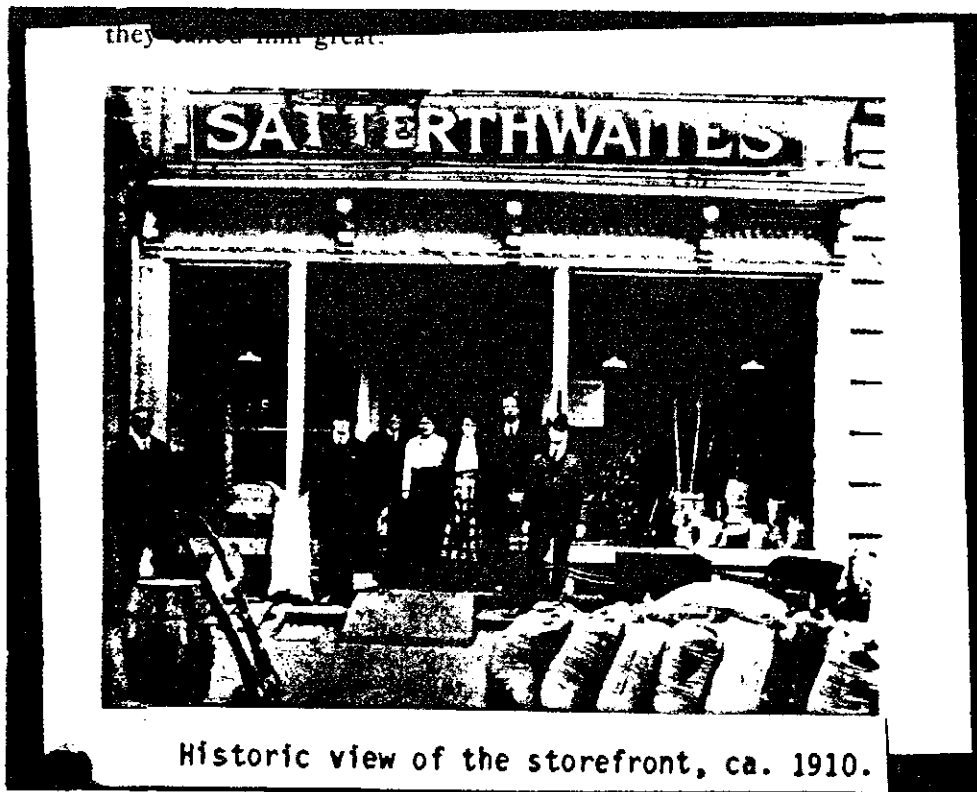
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Floor Plan





Historic view of the storefront, ca. 1887.



Historic view of the storefront, ca. 1910.